

## **Vitamin B12 Info Sheet**

### **What is vitamin B12?**

Vitamin B 12 is one of the several vitamins. It is needed to make new red blood cells and help your nervous system work well.

### **What are the sources of vitamin B12?**

Vitamin B12 is found naturally in meat, fish, eggs, and dairy products. Some people need to take vitamin supplements or vitamin B12 shots to get enough.

### **What is vitamin B12 deficiency?**

Vitamin B12 deficiency can be identified by laboratory testing of your blood serum. If serum vitamin B12 levels is below the diagnostic threshold 200 pg/mL, it is called vitamin B12 deficiency.

### **What are the signs and symptoms of a vitamin B12 deficiency?**

Vitamin B12 deficiency develops slowly, and symptoms appear so gradually that they can be missed. Vitamin B12 deficiency can cause anemia over time. The symptoms of anemia include feeling weak, tired, and faint; heart palpitations; looking pale; and shortness of breath. Vitamin B12 deficiency can also cause tingling of hands and feet, changes in ability to walk, loss of vision, memory problems, seeing things that aren't there, sadness, and changes in personality. Infants and young children who are vitamin B12 deficient might have problems growing, weak muscle tone, delays in development, and general weakness.

### **What should I do if I think I might have vitamin B12 deficiency?**

If you have those symptoms, please visit your doctor.

### **Who is at risk for a vitamin B12 deficiency?**

The chances for developing vitamin B12 deficiency increase with age, untreated pernicious anemia, gastric (stomach) surgery, or long-term use of strict vegetarian (vegan) diet. Infants and young children born to and breastfed by women who are vegans are also more likely to develop this deficiency.

Vitamin B12 deficiency might be more common than you think. Approximately 1 out of every 31 persons 51 years of age and older in the U. S. has vitamin B12 deficiency (serum vitamin B12 levels below the diagnostic threshold (200 pg/mL)). Vitamin B12 deficiency is found among 30 to 60 out of 100 Bhutanese refugees resettled in the United States by Jan 2011.

Source:

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/VitaminB12/>

[http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6011a4.htm?s\\_cid=mm6011a4\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6011a4.htm?s_cid=mm6011a4_w)